

Chapter 7.0

Significant Irreversible Environmental Impacts

The construction and implementation of the proposed project would require the commitment of energy, materials and human resources. This commitment of energy, personnel and building materials would be commensurate with that of other landfill projects of similar magnitude.

Existing on-site natural resources would be eliminated within the development area of the project site if the project were constructed. Primary resources that would be eliminated include the incremental loss of soil resources, undeveloped land/open space, and the displacement of native coastal sage scrub, chaparral, coast live oak woodland, cottonwood-willow riparian forest, native perennial grassland, southern willow scrub, and mule fat scrub.

The Gregory Canyon site possesses aesthetic value since it serves as a primary remaining open space area within the Pala-Pauma subregion. Additionally, the project site is located within viewsheds of existing residences and drivers along SR 76. The site possesses cultural value because of its proximity to Gregory Mountain and Medicine Rock.

On-going maintenance and closure of the project site by the applicant would entail a further commitment of energy resources in the form of fuel and electricity. This commitment would be a long-term obligation in view of the fact that, practically speaking, it is impossible to return the land to its original condition once it has been developed. However, as established in Chapter 4, the impacts of increased energy and electricity usage would not be considered significant adverse environmental impacts.

In summary, implementation of the proposed Gregory Canyon Landfill would involve the following irreversible environmental changes to the existing on-site resources:

- The commitment of approximately 308 acres of the existing property to landfill uses. A minimum of 1,313 acres of the total 1,770 acres are planned to be dedicated as open space to create a substantial preservation for sensitive habitat and species. Upon closure, the entire landfill site would remain as open space.
- Commitment of energy and water resources as a result of the construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed landfill facility.
- Alteration of the existing topographic character of the site.
- Consumption of soil resources.
- Use of fossil fuels to operate fixed and mobile construction equipment including bulldozers, graders, trucks, dump trucks and generators.
- Direct and indirect impacts on biological resources on the site, including native plant communities, birds and mammals.
- Removal of, or potential destruction of archeological and paleontological resources on the site.
- Potential impacts to identified cultural resources (Gregory Mountain and Medicine Rock).